(c) the brief assessment of the interest shown by international companies to participate in the privatisation programme during the road shows held at New Delhi and London recently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) No decision has been taken to float a Special Purpose Vehicle for each of the four metro airports.

(c) The attendance at the Pre-Investment Meets of New Delhi and London were by invitation. The list of invitees included international airport operators, other international companies, international financial investors, Indian companies & financial institutions and international investment banks and advisory firms, 32 organisations attended the Delhi meet and 39 organisations attended London meet.

Profit by Air India

1964. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India has crossed 70 years of its establishment and after a lapse of six years has registered a profit of Rs. 40 crore during the first six months of the current fiscal year;

(b) if so, what is the target fixed for the current as well as next financial year;

(c) whether Air India is one of the four airlines across the globe which is making profit after 11th September, 2001; and

(d) if so, what are the reasons for its disinvestment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir. As per provisional estimates, Air India has made a profit of Rs. 46.79 crores during the first half of the current financial year.

(b) The budget for the financial year 2002-03 has estimated a net profit of Rs. 24.50 crores. The revised estimates for the year 2002-03 and budget estimates for 2003-04 are still under compilation.

(c) Air India has turned around and is making a profit despite the event of September 11, 2001 and its effects.

(d) The disinvestment plan for both Air India and Indian Airlines is in recognition of the need of operating the two airlines on commercial principles with competitive spirit so that they can thrive in an intensely competitive environment.

Air service from Muzaffarpur

†1965. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to start air service from Patahi airport, Muzaffarpur in Bihar or whether any proposal in this regard is under Government's consideration;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) No, Sir. Airline Operators are, however, free to operate on any sector depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability subject to compliance with the Route Dispersal Guidelines.

Improvement in catering on board IA

†1966. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state whether Government propose to streamline and improve the quality of system of providing information with regard to quality of edible items, adherence of time schedule and flights in their airlines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): Indian Airlines constantly endeavours to upgrade and add value to its product and services. Various steps have been taken by Indian Airlines to improve the quality of food served, on time performance and flight information dissemination system.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.